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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, Sustainer of humanity, thank You for faithfully providing for all of our needs. When we have trusted Your guidance, You have consistently ordered our steps, doing for us more than we can ask or imagine.

Today, give our lawmakers a generous portion of Your wisdom. Remind them that Your wisdom is pure, peace-loving, considerate, humble, merciful, and impartial. Provide our Senators with power to carry out their responsibilities in a way that honors You.

Lord, as Memorial Day approaches, we praise You for all of the sacrifices made for this land we love.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 24, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. HELLER thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Jelena McWilliams, of Ohio, to be Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term of five years; and Jelena McWilliams, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term of six years.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we are in the midst of quite a productive week in the Senate. Yesterday, this body did its part in fulfilling an important promise to our Nation's veterans. We passed the VA MISSION Act by a wide, bipartisan margin.

Having already passed the House, this truly landmark bill will now head

to the White House where the President will soon sign it into law.

It will bring more options and greater flexibility to veterans who have spent years driving long distances to the nearest VA care facility, only to face long lines and waiting lists when they got there.

It will bring more peace of mind for veterans of all eras and their families who have faced uncertainty and limitations as their needs for care have evolved.

This legislation continues, expands, and improves the successful Veterans Choice Program that has already helped millions of veterans nationwide, including more than 23,000 Kentuckians last year alone.

Thanks to the stalwart leadership of Chairman ISAKSON and the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the hard-and-fast time and distance thresholds that kept too many veterans out of the Choice Program will soon be gone.

The providers we trust to provide top-notch care for our heroes will have clearer guidelines for prescribing opioids and more tools to attract and retain experienced professionals.

I have heard from Kentucky veterans exactly what this bill will mean to them. One wrote: "Kentucky disabled veterans greatly appreciate Congress is finally taking action to correct deficiencies in the Caregiver Program."

Another explained that the legislation "strikes the right balance to make sure we strengthen the VA system and provide veterans with the best care possible."

I thank my friend Chairman ISAKSON once more on this achievement. I am proud the Senate stepped up to the plate and showed America's veterans that, on our watch, a promise made is a promise kept.

What is more, we have already confirmed two executive branch nominees and will process two more before the end of the week. First up is Jelena McWilliams, President Trump's well-

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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qualified pick to chair the FDIC Board of Directors.

This week, we have also seen an impressive proposal to reform the way Congress handles workplace claims, especially claims of harassment. The Democratic leader and I strongly support this proposal, as do our colleagues Senator BLUNT and Senator KLOBUCHAR.

All this comes in addition to two major Senate-passed bills that passed the House this week and are now heading to the President's desk to become law: the legislation championed by our colleague Senator JOHNSON, which will give terminally ill patients the right to try experimental drugs that are still making their way through the full FDA approval process, and the mainstreaming of Dodd-Frank regulations for small lenders and community banks, thanks to the leadership of Senator CRAPO. This legislation will help secure access to credit for middle-class families and small businesses, and the President will sign it just a few hours from now.

There is also important activity underway at the committee level. Chairman BARRASSO is leading the Environment and Public Works Committee through consideration of measures to improve and expand America's waterways infrastructure. Chairman SHELBY and the Appropriations Committee today have already begun their work on the annual funding bills. Following the committee's robust discussions, I look forward to bringing the appropriations bills they craft to the Senate floor. Earlier this week, the Armed Services Committee began considering this year's Defense authorization bill. They have a solid foundation on which to build, thanks to the historic agreement reached earlier this year that delivered the highest year-on-year increase in funding for our Armed Forces in 15 years.

One bill after another, one confirmation after another, the Senate continues to produce major accomplishments that will directly improve the lives of the American people.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, on that subject, yesterday brought yet another piece of exciting news for American workers and middle-class families. The U.S. manufacturer United Technologies announced new plans to invest \$15 billion right here in America and hire 35,000 American workers in the next several years.

This Fortune 100 company makes a wide variety of engineered products, from jet engines to elevators. Now, because of this favorable climate for business growth, investment, and job creation, they are putting billions into research and development and capital investment and creating tens of thousands of new job openings.

To fill some of these job openings, the company is partnering with community colleges, high schools, and other workforce training programs.

This all comes on the heels of the company's other recent investments, like the new 93,000-square-foot facility in Lansing, MI, and a new 80,000-square-foot facility in Foley, AL.

What is making all this possible? According to United Technologies' announcement, "The competitive tax system resulting from U.S. tax reform is encouraging global companies, such as United Technologies, to make long-term investments in innovation in America."

This announcement is exactly the kind of headline you would expect to see in an America that is growing again. It is exactly what you would expect to happen as Republican policies continue to get Washington, DC, out of the way of American workers and job creators, and let them do what they do best—build an economy that is the envy of the rest of the world.

Yesterday's announcement was no isolated incident. We are hearing announcements like this from job creators, large and small, from national employers to Main Street businesses in my State of Kentucky and all across the country.

Back in 2013, under the Democrats' policy agenda, more than two-thirds of U.S. manufacturers reported that a hostile business climate due to taxes and regulation was a primary obstacle in their way. That was in 2013.

Today, just 16 months into this unified Republican government, fewer than one in five say that. This comeback for American manufacturing means new job openings for American workers, more prosperity for our small towns and cities, and higher take-home pay for middle-class American families.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, this morning, I would like to address four issues at varying lengths: recent news on the North Korea summit, the Russia probe, the proposed rescission of Ebola funding, and a word about the upcoming Memorial Day holiday.

NORTH KOREA

First, Madam President, on the very recent news that President Trump has canceled the planned summit with Kim Jong Un of North Korea, the fear many of us had was that the summit between President Trump and Kim Jong Un would be a great show that produced nothing enduring. If a summit is to be reconstituted, the United States must show strength and achieve a concrete, verifiable, enduring elimination of Kim Jong Un's nuclear capabilities.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Second, Madam President, on the Russia probe, today on Capitol Hill, Department of Justice, FBI, and intelligence community officials are scheduled to brief the Members of Congress on a few issues related to Special Counsel Mueller's investigation into Putin's meddling in the 2016 election.

There will be two briefings—one for a House Republican partisan who has relentlessly harassed the Justice Department to reveal sources and methods to him for the sole purpose of interfering with and denigrating the special counsel's investigation. After several requests, the Department of Justice will also brief the bipartisan Gang of 8 on the same information separately later in the day.

While we believe no briefing should occur, it is a good thing that the Gang of 8 will be briefed. The overwhelming fact remains that a separate meeting with a known partisan whose only intent is to undermine the Mueller investigation makes no sense and should be called off. What is the point of a separate briefing if not to cause partisan trouble and create a he said, she said scenario? It is so damaging to the way our officials in the Justice Department have always worked.

Representative NUNES, the architect of this sham briefing, no longer deserves the benefit of the doubt. He lost all claims to objectivity long ago with his ridiculous, late-night charade at the White House and his conduct on the House Intelligence Committee, culminating in a document of innuendo and whitewashing that has recently come to be called the Nunes memo.

The reason Leader PELOSI and I requested a Gang of 8 briefing was because that is the process for Congress to review sensitive and potentially classified information—it has been the process for decades—the reason being, the Gang of 8 is already read into sensitive national security information and because the Gang of 8 is bipartisan. When one party—Representative NUNES, who so clearly wants to distort national security information for partisan purposes—asks for a solitary briefing, there shouldn't be a briefing at all.

Our preference would still be for the Justice Department to cancel the briefing today, but if it goes forward, there should be one briefing and one briefing only: bipartisan, Gang of 8.

It is also wholly inappropriate that General Kelly is at all involved in these briefings. The White House should never be allowed to interfere in an ongoing DOJ investigation, but it is absolutely beyond the pale that they are interfering in an investigation involving the President and his campaign. The person and people being investigated are being briefed on their investigation before it concludes. That doesn't happen in our justice system no matter who you are. Americans will rightly wonder why General Kelly was present. To erase their doubts, he should skip the meeting.

Alongside all the action on Capitol Hill today, President Trump continues to fabricate a false narrative about deep-state bias against his Presidency. This is what a child does. You look at them like they are doing something wrong, and they blame something else. They try to divert your attention. That is how the President is acting.

Yesterday, he tweeted: "Look at how things have turned around on the Criminal Deep State." Well, Mr. President, I direct you to your own Secretary of State. You just appointed him, promoted him. Here is what he said yesterday:

I don't believe there's a deep state at the State Department. . . . The employees . . . at the CIA nearly uniformly were aimed at achieving . . . America's objectives.

That is the President's own Secretary of State, his own former CIA Director, dispensing with this fantastical notion of a deep state.

The President says there were spies in his campaign. It is all in the same vein of his other conspiracy theories. Remember, President Trump said that Obama tapped his phones. That was false. He said before that Russia did not interfere in our elections. That was false. Why should we think the claim that there were spies in his campaign is any different? He makes it up as he goes along to divert attention from the real issue: that Russia tried to influence our election; did influence our election; and there may, may, may—we don't know for sure, but we have to find out—have been collusion with members of President Trump's campaign and even President Trump in that regard. That is serious stuff. We have already had 13 indictments. It is beyond any doubt that Russia did try to influence our election. We need to find out who participated. That is imperative to the future of this country.

The President, acting like he has something to hide, keeps trying to subvert the investigation by simply inventing enemies out of shadows and sowing division in our country. If it were anyone else, we would call it paranoia.

Meanwhile, the President continues to risk our national security by using an unsecured cell phone for some of his communications. When the Washington Post asked a national security expert the odds of a foreign adversary having gained access to the President's unsecured cell phone, the expert responded: "100 percent, the question is how many foreign powers."

So while President Trump points the finger of blame in every direction and was relentless that Hillary Clinton broke security protocols, he is guilty of creating a real national security threat every time he picks up his cell phone to call Sean Hannity or Rudy Giuliani. It is amazing. It is utterly amazing, the times we are living in, and it amazes me so that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle still remain silent—still remain silent. Who would have thought.

EBOLA FUNDING

Madam President, in early May, President Trump proposed rescinding \$250 million meant to combat the Ebola virus and other infectious diseases. Not only are these rescissions a slap in the face of the bipartisan budget process, but they are dangerous to our national health and security.

Just last week, a new case of the Ebola virus was confirmed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and at least two dozen people have already died in this most recent outbreak.

Let's not forget how vociferously our friends on the other side of the aisle criticized President Obama on how he handled the Ebola outbreak in 2014. Once again, Donald Trump totally contradicts what he said in the past with what he is doing now.

Here is what Donald Trump tweeted in 2014:

Ebola has been confirmed in NYC with officials frantically trying to find all of the people and things he had contact with. Obama's fault.

Well, does he now say that it is Trump's fault? What mind-bending hypocrisy.

Now President Donald Trump proposes rescinding the same funding that Congress passed to help handle the Ebola crisis in 2014 and that continues to keep America safe. God forbid this funding is rescinded and Ebola outbreaks reemerge. It would actually be President Trump's fault.

The President should withdraw his rescission request for this funding, as Senator LEAHY and his colleagues on the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee asked in a letter this week. That funding should be free for USAID to use as Congress intended. And Donald Trump ought to learn from his past statements. If he can blame Obama for not fully going after the Ebola outbreak in 2014, why is he cutting money for Ebola now?

MEMORIAL DAY

Finally, Madam President, on a solemn note, before the Memorial Day weekend, I want to express my deep and abiding gratitude to the men and women in the armed services who gave their last full measure of devotion in defense of our Nation and our freedoms. This morning, I am thinking of one veteran: Larry Reilly, Sr., of Syracuse, NY. He was known to us by his naval rank: Chief Reilly. Chief Reilly served on the USS *Frank E. Evans*, along with his son who carried his name, Larry Reilly, Jr. The *Frank E. Evans* sunk, tragically, in a training accident just outside the combat zone during the Vietnam war, killing 74. Chief Reilly survived the accident; Larry Reilly, Jr., did not.

Because the Department of Defense did not consider the *Frank E. Evans* disaster a wartime casualty—it was a short distance outside the combat zone—we will not find the name of Larry Reilly, Jr., on that wall of black stone a few miles from here. None of the names of the 74 sailors who died

that day grace the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Chief Reilly spent much of his energies in the years since the war trying to right that wrong, to get his son and his son's fellow shipmates who passed away in that tragedy their rightful place in our Nation's history.

Chief Reilly, I regret to inform everyone, passed away earlier this week. We who knew Chief Reilly remember him fondly. We send our condolences to his friends and his family, along with the message that his cause does not die with him. In his honor, we will continue to pressure the Pentagon to recognize the *Frank E. Evans*, and those who were killed when it suffered this tragedy, on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

This weekend, as we honor our fallen veterans in big cities and in small towns throughout this grand country, I will be thinking of Chief Reilly and his son. May we never forget the sacrifices they made, along with so many others, so that we may all enjoy the full blessings of liberty.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

(The remarks of Mr. WICKER pertaining to the introduction of S. 2955 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. WICKER. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ABORTION

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, last week, the Trump administration proposed new rules to finally bring Federal policy back in line with Federal law. This should not be controversial in a republic committed to the rule of law. But this new policy touches the question of abortion, which tempts all three branches of our Federal Government to turn truth, justice, and the law inside out in the service of violence. President Trump, to his credit, is resisting those temptations and affirming what the law should do—affirming the fact that the law should do what the law says.

The particular law in question is the Public Health Service Act. Every year, it allocates hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to public health centers across the country. Under the 1970 statute, no Public Health Service dollars "shall be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning." That is, the bill was expressly written to fund healthcare for lower income communities, including family planning services, but not to fund or facilitate abortion, which, of course, is the opposite of healthcare.

Yet in the 1980s, the General Accounting Office found that abortion providers were colocating their non-abortion and abortion-providing services and just keeping two different sets of books. This put patients, policymakers, and taxpayers in an impossible position. So regulations correcting this obvious abuse of the law were implemented; then they were upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Subsequent Democratic Presidents rescinded these regulations, leaving the abortion industry free to indulge its ever-growing appetite for Americans' blood and treasure. This is the unacceptable status quo that the Trump administration would correct.

By reinstating some of those prior regulations, President Trump is following through on his campaign promise to the American people to get taxpayer money out of the abortion industry. This is to his great credit. Wherever you stand on the question of legalized killing of unborn children, it is essential that we draw the line at taxpayer funding of it.

The new rule would indeed reduce the flow of Federal dollars to abortion providers, including the billion-dollar behemoth of the grisly industry, Planned Parenthood. Even a modest step in this direction—in this case, about 15 percent—is to be commended.

In addition to incremental reform, this new rule is also a clarifying asset. After all, it does not deny Planned Parenthood or any colocated clinics anything. It doesn't deny anything to them. It simply offers them a choice, and given Planned Parenthood's protestations that abortions are just a tiny fraction of what Planned Parenthood does, the choice should be easy enough.

If, despite their billions of dollars of taxpayer subsidies and private donations, Planned Parenthood and its accomplice organizations can't afford two local facilities—one for abortion and one for nonabortion care and counseling—they will just have to choose which clinic to keep open. They will have to decide—or, perhaps, just publicly admit—what business it is that they are really in: healthcare or abortion, life or death. Of course, we already know the answer. That is why Planned Parenthood is widely expected to lead a lawsuit to block the regulation just as soon as it is implemented.

As the New York Times recently put it, abortion is to Planned Parenthood what the internet is to Facebook; that is, like justice and the rule of law are to the American Republic.

Our abortion-on-demand legal regime today is doubly unjust, first, because it was created by judges rather than elected lawmakers and, second, because it denies the undeniable humanity of the unborn. President Trump's new policy would improve the law on both counts. First, it would bring the administration of the law back into line with Congress's clear, statutory text. Second, it would signal that in this White House, the protection of in-

nocent human life will be the guiding principle that it should be in any civilized society.

The new rule will protect Americans' right to protect themselves and the unborn from taxpayer-funded abortions and, hopefully, create just a little more space for the weakest and the most vulnerable among us to grow, to thrive, and to hope that we will one day see that inevitable day not so far from now when our laws and our hearts answer the immutable call of justice, love, and respect for the dignity of the human soul.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Massachusetts.

CONFIRMATION OF BRIAN MONTGOMERY

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, Donald Trump promised during his inaugural address to fight for "the forgotten men and women of our country," but in Donald Trump's Washington, the Senate sits on its hands as the revolving door spins faster and faster. Brian Montgomery is just the latest in a line of bankers, lawyers, investors, and consultants who cashed in on their big-time public service and now want back in.

Mr. Montgomery has just been confirmed to be the Commissioner of the Federal Housing Administration, the FHA, which provides taxpayer-backed insurance that helps millions of Americans buy homes they might not otherwise be able to afford. Lenders make loans to these families because the FHA gives them some protection in case the families default. Like any insurance, there are strict rules about who qualifies. Unless it is managed well, the FHA could expose taxpayers to a risk of billions of dollars in losses.

Mr. Montgomery knows something about the FHA. He was the Commissioner from 2006 to 2009 while the housing market was flying high and when it all came crashing down. Since almost the day he left, he has been making buckets of money selling his knowledge to banks who broke the rules and are trying to escape the consequences.

Here is what I mean. One month after leaving the FHA, Mr. Montgomery founded and became vice chairman of a new company called Collingwood Group which, according to reports, was known in the housing finance industry as a specialist in helping firms navigate FHA-related penalties and lawsuits. Who better to navigate the rules of the FHA than the guy who used to be in charge of the FHA?

One of Collingwood's clients was Wells Fargo. They were in trouble for defrauding FHA, and in 2016 paid HUD a \$1.2 billion fine. That is billion with a "b." Wells Fargo admitted that from 2001 to 2008, it had lied to the FHA about whether certain loans were eligible for FHA insurance. Mr. Montgomery was in charge of the FHA from 2006 to 2008 and let that fraud happen. After he left, he went to the other team, giving Wells Fargo the inside scoop on how to beat the rap.

Collingwood also represented U.S. Bank. In 2014, U.S. Bank paid \$200 million for defrauding FHA. In its settlement, U.S. Bank admitted that "from 2006 through 2011, it repeatedly certified for FHA insurance mortgage loans that did not meet HUD underwriting requirements." The taxpayers paid Mr. Montgomery to manage the FHA for 3 of those years, and he didn't stop the fraud. When he left, U.S. Bank paid him to help them get away with it. I guess it pays to be an inside guy.

I have seen some amazing cases of people spinning through the revolving door, but this one might take the cake. First, Montgomery runs an agency that puts taxpayer money on the line. While there, he looks the other way as the banks submit piles of fraudulent mortgages. The government then loses millions and millions of taxpayer dollars. Then, Mr. Montgomery waltzes right out the door and 1 month later starts a company advising the same big banks on how to pay the government back as little as possible for frauds they committed on his watch.

Look, he may have the best of intentions, but we can never expect the American people to trust Washington if we approve nominees like Mr. Montgomery. It is bad enough that he put taxpayer money at risk by looking the other way as the banks committed fraud and then bad enough that he got rich working for those same banks. Now the Senate is letting him go back and do it all over again? No way. It is finally time to crack down on the revolving door.

Mr. President, 10 years ago, as the economy lurched toward a financial crisis, millions of American families braced for the impact. Over the next few years, almost 9 million families lost their jobs and millions more lost their homes and their savings. Giant banks—pillars of Wall Street for generations—crumbled, bringing communities across this country with it.

In the aftermath of the crisis, Congress passed commonsense rules to make sure Wall Street could never again crash the economy and leave American families with the wreckage, but Donald Trump thinks that Dodd-Frank is "a disaster," and he has promised to do a "big number" on the safeguards it created. He hired an army of bankers and bank lawyers from Wall Street to do the deed, and now Jelena McWilliams is the latest piece in the puzzle.

Here is just one example. In the runup to the crisis, giant banks proved to be terrible judges of risk and ended up sucking down billions of dollars in taxpayer bailouts just to survive. To fix this, Dodd-Frank directed the banking regulators to set strong capital standards that limited how much risk the big banks could load up on and required them to hold enough cushion to survive in case their bets went bad.

Policymakers and regulators from both sides of the aisle agree that these financial regulations made our economy safer. Former FDIC Chair Sheila

Bair and former Vice Chairman Thomas Hoenig—both Republican appointees—recently wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that gutting capital rules “would weaken system resiliency.” Current FDIC Chair Martin Gruenberg—a Democrat—said that strong capital requirements were “among the most important post-crisis reforms” and has opposed joint efforts by the Fed and the Treasury to undermine them.

Ms. McWilliams would drop that opposition. In fact, she is not even sure there was anything wrong with the capitalist standards before the crisis. That is not the only rule she would roll back. Donald Trump’s Wall Street mercenaries have taken aim at a lot of critical post-crisis rules, and everything we know about Ms. McWilliams suggests she will support those efforts. Here is what is on the agenda.

First, there is the Volcker rule, which prohibits bank deposits from gambling with Grandma’s checking money. Banks are looking to scrap this rule, even though they are raking in literally record profits, but the FDIC has to agree before there are any changes. As soon as Ms. McWilliams is confirmed, bingo. Sorry, Grandma.

Next is guidance that prevents banks from offering abusive, short-term loans similar to payday loan products. The OCC has told the banks it regulates to have at it. With Ms. McWilliams in charge, it is only a matter of time before the FDIC banks get in the game.

Third, there is also the Community Reinvestment Act, the CRA, which is designed to make sure a bank serves all credit-worthy customers in its community, regardless of the color of their skin. Lending discrimination is rampant in America, even though 98 percent of banks pass their CRA exams, but banks and the Trump appointees they send to Washington want to make the test for passing even easier. Under Ms. McWilliams, the FDIC evidently will not stand in the way.

I could go on and on, but here is the thing. It is not just that I disagree with Ms. McWilliams or think her actions will make consumers and our economy less safe; it is that Senate Republicans are stacking the deck to allow Ms. McWilliams to make these decisions without any discussion.

The five-member FDIC Board is supposed to be split between Republicans and Democrats, but the Senate is moving to confirm Ms. McWilliams before the White House has even nominated a Democratic Vice Chair for the agency. If Ms. McWilliams moves forward, the FDIC will be under complete Republican control for an indefinite amount of time. Democrats should oppose the McWilliams nomination on this basis alone.

Ms. McWilliams is the latest Trump appointee who thinks the biggest problem with our financial rules is that the government is just too darn hard on the banks. Most Americans don’t feel that way. They want tougher rules on

Wall Street, not weaker ones. We should listen to them because they are the ones who pay the price when things go wrong on Wall Street.

I urge my colleagues to vote no.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Jelena McWilliams to be the Chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

A native of the former Yugoslavia, Jelena earned her bachelor’s degree and J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. From tough experiences that her family shared in Europe, Jelena understands the value hard work provides in a free market environment like ours.

The FDIC plays an important role in ensuring consumer confidence in our Nation’s banks. In addition to their work as the prudential regulator for State-chartered banks, the FDIC is also a key part of many interagency efforts to appropriately regulate financial institutions.

Due to her vast experience, Jelena is beyond qualified for this esteemed position. To put it clearly, she has worked in all fields that interact with her new role. She is certainly no stranger to the Senate. During my time as chairman, Jelena served as chief counsel and deputy staff director of the Senate Banking Committee. Additionally, she was assistant chief counsel on the Senate Small Business Committee and has experience working for the Federal Reserve. Jelena also has private sector experience as an attorney in private practice. She also served as executive vice president, chief legal officer, and corporate secretary for Fifth Third Bank.

Opposition to her nomination is unfathomable. Ms. McWilliams was reported out of the Banking Committee by a voice vote in February. She understands all sides of the areas she will regulate with the highest level of sophistication. However, that has not prevented Members of this body from being unreasonable. Opposition has appeared due to the nature of the Senate today, not due to any question regarding Jelena’s qualification for the job.

Passage of her nomination builds on positive momentum this week. With the passage of S. 2155, Congress has advanced appropriate scaling back of over-burdensome financial regulations. By confirming Jelena, the Senate has the opportunity to continue providing Main Street with commonsense regulatory relief. I am certain that Jelena is up for the challenge and confident that she will do an excellent job in this esteemed position.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this weekend, we honor those who have fought on the frontlines in battle and made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the United States of America. These men and women represent America at its best—a nation that is restless and

unwavering in combating tyranny, that facilitates peace, and defends human rights and individual liberty across the globe; a nation that is unafraid to call evil by its name and then works to eradicate it through force, if necessary, even at great cost to itself and its own people.

Today, in advance of the holiday weekend, I say thank you to the 200,000 military men and women who are stationed in my State, the State of Texas, and to the 1.7 million veterans who call Texas home.

Thank you for having served over the course of so many years in the face of so many dangers and at such great individual sacrifice.

Of course, many of their predecessors gave their lives defending this country on the bloody fields of Gettysburg, in the trenches of the Western Front, during the storming of the beaches at Normandy, and during the Shock and Awe in Baghdad. These are just some examples, each of them unique but none of which we should ever forget.

We must also thank the military families of those warriors. I pray they find peace on Monday, when many of them will place flowers on military grave sites and speak privately to their loved ones who have passed on.

In just a few days, I will have the chance to speak to young Texans who thought hard about their futures and the future of our country and decided they want to attend our U.S. military academies. These talented high school students are the cream of the crop. They have been accepted to our Nation’s five prestigious military service academies, and they will be gathering together, on Monday, in San Antonio.

Even though I am not the one who has nominated all of them, we invite everyone who has been nominated—and their families—to come to this academy sendoff. This sendoff is something I look forward to each year because it is an inspiration to me. At a time when people talk about the next generation and America’s future, they reassure me that our country still produces talented, patriotic young men and women who want to serve their country and want to preserve our freedom. Meeting these young people who are making such bold and selfless decisions speaks well of the character of our Nation’s next generation.

Then I will be heading down to Georgetown, TX, which is just outside of Austin, to a community called Sun City, which has a large veteran population. There, I will join in celebrating Memorial Day in a place where patriotism is not a dirty word. In Sun City, it is not an act either. Loving one’s country and honoring fallen soldiers is simply a given, and I know there will be a lot of American flags on full display.

In the few days leading up to Memorial Day, we should also reflect on our duty as Members of Congress and as a nation to support our military servicemembers and their families and ask whether we are living up to our end of the bargain in Washington, DC.

Just yesterday, we took a very important step in that regard by passing the VA MISSION Act, which includes some of the most substantial reforms to the veterans' healthcare system that have been made in years.

It lowers the barriers to care for veterans and gives them more treatment options. It also simplifies the bureaucratic system of community care programs and streamlines them from seven to one. It expands the family caregivers program, which I became convinced was important after having visited wounded warriors at Walter Reed. Frequently, because of the catastrophic injuries they have suffered, a spouse has had to quit his or her job and basically tend to the needs of that wounded warrior, just as a practical matter, and provide assistance in addition to the medical care that has been received. Expanding the family caregivers program is, I think, a step in the right direction.

In this bill, we also address opioid prescription guidelines for outside providers and encourage the hiring and retention of more Veterans Health Administration healthcare professionals.

So there is a lot to talk about when we go home for Memorial Day, and I look forward to talking to our Active-Duty military and our veterans and to demonstrating that we are doing more than just talking about it; we are actually doing something that will make a difference in their lives.

Upon our return, I am also looking forward to continuing our hard work on the National Defense Authorization Act, which is something the Presiding Officer is intimately involved in, which was marked up yesterday in the Armed Services Committee.

For 57 straight years, a Defense authorization bill has been signed into law by Presidents of both parties and through the hard work of congressional majorities that have been led by both parties. This year's legislation will help ensure our military has what it needs to achieve the most difficult missions they have ever faced and to embark on those that will inevitably arise tomorrow.

I have spoken quite a bit about the China threat recently at this podium, and that country bears mentioning again, right now, because of its connection to the Defense Authorization Act.

As the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee said recently, it is "[i]n the Indo-Pacific region [where] the United States faces a near-term, belligerent threat armed with nuclear weapons and also a longer-term strategic competitor."

China is that longer term strategic competitor, of course, and that is what Congressman MAC THORNBERRY was talking about. Yet we can't just stop with China and North Korea. We need to talk about Russia, Iran, and the civil war and terrorist threat arising out of Syria and the Middle East.

All of those are important in our deliberations on the Defense authoriza-

tion bill because the NDAA prioritizes military readiness across the globe where American leadership remains indispensable. It promotes security and stability in the Indo-Pacific, particularly through military exercises with our allies, and it improves Taiwan's defense capabilities while we keep our commitment to Taiwan that was established a long time ago.

The Defense authorization bill is important for reasons that hit much closer to home as well. In past years, this bill has authorized needed improvements at Texas military facilities like Fort Hood, Joint Base San Antonio, the Red River Army Depot, and Ellington Field. It has also given our troops a much needed pay raise and updated advanced aircraft, ships, and ground vehicles. All of these have implications in Texas.

As we get closer and closer to Memorial Day, let's remember what our Armed Forces have given for us, including their very lives, and everything they have given to us, which is our freedom that we enjoy every day.

Let's make sure we keep up our end of the bargain here in Washington with legislation like the VA MISSION Act and the Defense authorization bill and at home with our patriotism and our frequent signs of appreciation for their service to our great country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Texas for his inspiring words and for his devotion to Texas veterans and to American veterans across our country.

As we approach Memorial Day, this is a time to honor our fallen soldiers and to reflect on the enormous sacrifices the men and women in uniform have made for us who were killed while serving this Nation.

Mr. President, I rise to recognize the service and ultimate sacrifice of four Hoosier servicemembers who gave their lives in defending our country in the last year. The sacrifices of Ryan Lohrey, Jonathon Hunter, Mark Boner, and Clayton Cullen will not be forgotten.

In July 2017, we lost Navy Corpsman Ryan Lohrey. He died with 15 other servicemembers when a military refueling aircraft crashed in a soybean field in Mississippi. He was 30 years old.

Born in Anderson, Ryan was described as selfless and patient and humble. He played football at Shenandoah High School in Middletown, where he graduated in 2005. Two years after graduation, Ryan joined the Navy and served our country in deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. During his service, he earned a Purple Heart for being wounded in battle.

Last August, Army SGT Jonathon Hunter was killed in Afghanistan. Jonathon was born in Columbus. He was a man of faith who loved his country and his family. Before joining the Army, Jonathon played football at Co-

lumbus East High School and then pursued his dream of becoming a music producer before enrolling at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

He left college to join the Army. He was 23 years old and just 32 days into his first deployment when he and a fellow soldier were killed in a suicide bombing attack on a NATO convoy in southern Afghanistan. Jonathon was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart as well as a Bronze Star.

In January, we lost SFC Mark Boner of the Indiana Army National Guard. Mark was born in Fort Wayne. After graduating from Elmhurst High School in 1993, he answered the call to serve his country.

Mark enjoyed being at the lake, and he was a fan of the Notre Dame Fighting Irish. He served in the Army and in the Indiana National Guard. Mark had completed tours in both Iraq and Kuwait and died at Fort Hood, TX, where he was training for his third deployment for his country. He was only 43 years old.

Also in January, we lost another Hoosier: Army 1LT Clayton Cullen, of Bicknell. Clay graduated from North Knox High School in 2011, where he played soccer and served as student body president. After high school, he earned a degree from Indiana University and was in the school's ROTC program.

Clay was 25. He died when the helicopter he was aboard with another servicemember crashed at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, CA.

Each of these courageous men has left behind family, friends, and loved ones who miss them every day, miss them more tomorrow, and even more the following day.

As we pay tribute to these servicemembers, let us also recognize their families. Our hearts go out to every one of them, not only on Memorial Day but every day. At everything from family dinners and get-togethers to holidays, someone is missing their husband, their father, their brother or son. There is an empty seat that every heart wishes was filled.

While nothing could ever fill the void left by the loss of these servicemembers, their legacies live on through their families. The people I speak about represent not only the best of Hoosier values but of America's values. They serve their country so that we all can be safe, so that we all can be secure, so that we all can have our freedom protected. We grieve for them and we miss them. I join every Hoosier in praying for their friends, family, and fellow servicemembers.

On Memorial Day, we will pause to commemorate the extraordinary sacrifice so many men and women in uniform from across our State and Nation have made. Every day, in conflict zones across the world, American servicemembers put themselves in harm's way. We thank them for their courage

and bravery, and we remember the patriots who lost their lives and exemplified the very best of what our country is and can be.

One other note, I remember a few years ago when I was driving through Starke County, IN. It was early in the morning on Memorial Day. I drove through the town of Walkerton, IN. It was early in the morning. In the town cemetery there were a couple of dads and moms and their children. They were putting flags on every veteran's grave who had served our country and devoted their lives to our Nation. That scene that I saw was being duplicated in towns all across my State and all across our country, because the one thing all of us as Americans understand—whether we live in Indiana, Philadelphia, or in Ohio—is that there are young men and women from other towns and from other States who lost their lives to protect us, and we are all in it for each other. We are all in it together as Americans.

On Memorial Day, please say a prayer and think about all those who gave us the chance to celebrate our freedoms.

May God bless Indiana, and may God bless the United States of America.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, last week, Pope Francis released an unprecedented document detailing what is wrong with our financial system. That the Pope thought it was that important to weigh in tells you a lot about where we are as a nation.

We have an economy, the Pope noted, that defines success by corporate profits and measures time in quarterly earnings reports. That is not how families think. Washington may think that way, corporate CEOs may think that way, but families mark time in school years, in 30-year mortgages, and in years left to save for retirement. That is why the Pope called our current financial system “an inadequate framework that excludes the common good.”

Right now, working families are struggling in this country. The economic statistics may look rosy, but they mask serious problems that hold too many workers back and prevent entire communities from sharing in that growth.

The Pope warned last week that “work itself, together with its dignity, is increasingly at risk of losing its value.” Work is increasingly at risk of losing its value. Our economy simply doesn't value work the way it should.

Over the past 40 years, the link between productivity and wage increases

has eroded. Profits have gone up, CEO compensation has gone up, worker productivity has gone up, but wages have been stagnant. Workers simply don't get the help they should in compensation. Workers simply don't share in the wealth they create for stockholders and the wealth they create for executives and the wealth they create for CEOs.

Wages have ticked up a tiny bit recently, but, looking at the long run, they have been largely flat. Think about this: If there are 100 people in the Galleries, if they are average—maybe they are, maybe they aren't. If there are 100 people in the Galleries, 44 of them can't afford an emergency expense of \$400. Think about that. If they are a \$15-an-hour worker and their car breaks down and it costs \$600, what do they do? They go to get a payday loan, and we know what happens when they do that. Forty-four percent of American adults can't afford an emergency expense of \$400.

This is even more troubling: One in four renters in this country spends at least half their income on housing. If one thing goes wrong in their lives—if their child gets sick—they are unlikely to have sick leave or vacation days. So if their child gets sick, they either send their child to school sick or they stay home with their daughter or son and lose a day's pay. And if they are spending 50 percent of their income on housing, what happens? They are likely to be evicted, likely to be foreclosed on if they own their home and then their lives really spiral down.

In light of all that, this Congress thought the best thing to do was pass another giveaway to the big banks because Wall Street hasn't done enough. This body can't help itself. They fall all over themselves. The lobbyists going in and out of Leader MCCONNELL's office, and the Wall Street lobbyists—the White House increasingly looks like a retreat for Wall Street executives. This body just falls all over itself. We always have to help Wall Street. Over the next 7 or 8 years, 80 percent of the tax-cut bill that was passed last year will go to the richest 1 percent of the country, as if they need the help.

The giveaway to the big banks the President is going to sign tomorrow comes on the heels of a \$1.5 trillion—how much is a trillion? A trillion is 1,000 billion. How much is a billion? A billion is 1,000 million. It was a \$1.5 trillion deficit-financed tax cut for millionaires and more likely billionaires who control one political party in this body. It was tax cuts for billionaires and corporations that ship jobs overseas. Apparently that is just not enough, so this week, the House passed a bill loosening taxpayer protections on big banks that received a combined \$239 billion in taxpayer bailouts. Think about that. It weakens stress tests for all large banks. It opens the door to less oversight of foreign megabanks.

This bill also eliminates data-gathering that guards against mortgage

discrimination. We are bringing back redlining. There has been no racial discrimination in housing in this country, apparently, so let the banks and let the government that sometimes goes along with the banks get that red pencil—it is done with computers now—and draw around those neighborhoods so that those families—often people of color but not always—can't get equal access to home mortgages.

The Congressional Budget Office, which is the independent, nonpartisan scorekeeper, confirmed that this bill that just passed would increase the likelihood of a big bank failure and a financial crisis and would add \$670 million to the deficit.

What problem exactly is this Congress trying to solve?

One of my favorite quotes is from Abraham Lincoln. He was in the White House, and his staff wanted him to stay there and win the war and free the slaves and preserve the Union. He said: No. I have to go out and get my “public opinion baths.”

When I go back to Cleveland, where I live, or when I see my grandkids in Columbus or when I go anywhere else in the State, I go out and listen to people, and I try to get these public opinion baths. Never once have I heard somebody say: You know, Senator, with the problems we have, the first thing we have to do is weaken regulations to help Wall Street. I never hear that. The only people who say that are bankers and a bunch of politicians who are all well compensated, who have very good healthcare paid for by taxpayers, and who do what the banks want them to do.

The FDIC—the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation—released new data this week. Banks increased their profits by 13 percent over the last year. Of those 100 people in the Galleries, how many of them got a 13-percent raise last year? Well, banks increased their already strong profits by another 13 percent. It has happened almost every year this decade, since Congress bailed out the banks 8 years ago. That 13 percent is not even counting the windfall profits they got from the windfall tax bill. When they take the tax bill into account, banks profits went up not 13, not 15, not 20, but 28 percent.

The banking sector bought back \$77 billion worth of stock last year. Do you know what that means? That is all about raising compensation for the biggest stockholders and the CEO. The average bank teller in this country makes \$26,000 a year. Bank profits are up. CEO compensation is up. They are all doing very well. They got a big tax cut. The average teller makes \$26,000.

At my high school reunion in Mansfield a couple of years ago, I sat across the table from a woman with whom I graduated. She has worked as a teller in a large, well-known bank for 30 years, and she makes \$30,000 a year. She has worked there for 30 years. But the bank CEOs are doing very well—

millions and millions of dollars in compensation.

If these banks fail again, it will be those tellers, it will be the middle manager, it will be the millions of other American taxpayers who will be called on to bail them out. That is why we did Wall Street reform—Dodd-Frank—several years ago. We passed a law that created important protections for the financial system, for taxpayers, for homeowners, to hold banks and watchdogs accountable and prevent another crisis.

Do you know what? The day that bill was signed, the chief Financial Services—do you know what the chief bank lobbyist in this city did? The day it was signed, he said: “You know, it is halftime.”

What does that mean? “It is halftime” means that you might have passed this law that we didn’t like—we, Wall Street—but we are going to fight like hell to weaken the rules to implement the law. And once we get a Republican majority and we have a majority leader and, further down the hall, a Speaker of the House who does whatever Wall Street asks them to do, then it will be time to come back and weaken the laws.

That is what happened with the election of this President and the election of the majority leader and the Speaker of the House. It is time to go back to Wall Street and say: How can we help you, sir? It is almost always a sir.

Another bank lobbyist, when he talked about these negotiations, said: We don’t want a seat at the table; we want the whole table.

Wall Street greed knows no bounds. That is why it is a huge concern that the White House looks like a retreat for Wall Street executives. Special interests are getting the whole table. The President is signing the big bank give-away into law.

Here is the last point I want to spend a little time on. They are trying to install yet another Wall Street nominee with the troubling record of dismissing the harm Wall Street inflicted on Main Street—Jelena McWilliams, who is listed as Ms. McWilliams of Ohio, my State. I would like to support a fellow Ohioan. She hasn’t really lived in Ohio very long. I know she has moved back. But I would still like to support a fellow Ohioan. She has been nominated to be the Chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, but she has never supported the need for strong rules and tough supervision for the banking system.

At her nomination hearing, she declined to acknowledge the role that excessive bank borrowing played in causing the 2008 collapse. What are we going to do? On whom are we going to blame the bank collapse, the economy going into the toilet, the fact that millions of Americans lost jobs, millions of Americans had their homes foreclosed on, and billions and billions of dollars were lost from seniors’ retirement accounts? We are going to blame

that on them? Wall Street, of course, had nothing to do with it.

Right now, the Fed is considering a proposal to weaken protections and give a \$120 billion windfall to the eight largest banks. Even former Chairs and Vice Chairs of the FDIC appointed by Republicans, two people I admire—Sheila Bair, who used to be chief of staff for Bob Dole, appointed to the FDIC by President Bush and kept by President Obama; and Thomas Hoenig, another Republican from the Kansas City Fed and a Republican regulator—they have opposed this proposal. But Mrs. McWilliams refused to do so.

On issue after issue—payday lending at banks, cost-benefit analysis, the Volcker rule—she has shown no independence from this White House that looks like a retreat for Wall Street executives.

The FDIC was designed to be independent and nonpartisan. We don’t need another rubberstamp from Wall Street’s agenda on the FDIC board, particularly when we have no commitment to move the nominations for Democratic seats. We need independent thinkers at these agencies who are willing to push back against a big-bank agenda.

Last week, Fed Vice Chair Randall Quarles gave a speech saying—just as we predicted—the Federal Reserve wants to loosen rules on foreign megabanks. So it is not just that we are doing favors for Wall Street, but we are doing favors for these multidecabillion or hundreds of billions of dollars foreign banks. We decided to make it easier on them.

Yesterday, former OneWest banker Joseph Otting announced that he wants banks to get into the business of payday loans. They have always said they have nothing to do with these payday loans. Well, they do. Otting has other plans to gut the Community Reinvestment Act—a 40-year old law that ensures that banks serve their communities. And we could spend hours detailing what Mick Mulvaney is doing to the Consumer Protection Bureau.

In closing, I will go back to the Pope’s message. He noted that “while most of [the financial industry’s] operators are singularly animated by good and right intentions, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the financial industry . . . is a place where selfishness and the abuse of power have an enormous potential to harm the community.”

A little selfishness, a little abuse can have massive consequences when it comes to the financial system. Families in Ohio can’t afford that risk. It is our job to protect those families.

The Pope said: “Those entrusted with political authority find it difficult to fulfill to their original vocation as servants of the common good.”

We should listen a little more to the people we serve, and we should listen a little less to Wall Street. We should break the addiction to Wall Street money. We should break our allegiance

to Wall Street interests. That is how we create an economy that values work and create an economy that serves the common good and not corporate special interests.

I ask my colleagues to vote against the nomination of Ms. McWilliams.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the votes following the first vote in this series be 10 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Jelena McWilliams to be Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation?

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 24, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 109 Ex.]

YEAS—69

Alexander	Ernst	Manchin
Barrasso	Fischer	McCaskill
Bennet	Gardner	McConnell
Blunt	Graham	Menendez
Boozman	Grassley	Moran
Burr	Hatch	Murkowski
Capito	Heitkamp	Murphy
Cardin	Hoeven	Nelson
Carper	Hyde-Smith	Paul
Casey	Inhofe	Perdue
Cassidy	Isakson	Peters
Collins	Johnson	Portman
Coons	Jones	Reed
Corker	Kaine	Risch
Cornyn	Kennedy	Roberts
Cotton	King	Rounds
Crapo	Klobuchar	Sasse
Daines	Lankford	Scott
Donnelly	Leahy	Shaheen
Enzi	Lee	Shelby

Sullivan	Tillis	Warner
Tester	Toomey	Wicker
Thune	Van Hollen	Young

NAYS—24

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Schatz
Blumenthal	Harris	Schumer
Booker	Heinrich	Smith
Brown	Hirono	Stabenow
Cantwell	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Sanders	Wyden

NOT VOTING—7

Cruz	Hassan	Rubio
Duckworth	Heller	
Flake	McCain	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Jelena McWilliams to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Luxembourg.

Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, John Thune, Roy Blunt, Ron Johnson, Cory Gardner, Lindsey Graham, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, James E. Risch, Todd Young, John Hoeven, Mike Rounds, David Perdue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Luxembourg, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 110 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Alexander	Gardner	Perdue
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heitkamp	Rounds
Capito	Hoeven	Sasse
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Scott
Collins	Inhofe	Shelby
Corker	Isakson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Johnson	Tester
Cotton	Kennedy	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Donnelly	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young
Ernst	Murkowski	
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Jones	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Harris	Nelson	

NOT VOTING—7

Cruz	Hassan	Rubio
Duckworth	Heller	
Flake	McCain	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Luxembourg.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 1:45 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Nebraska.

TRIBUTE TO VAUGHAN WEHR

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to my longtime scheduler and dear friend, Vaughan Wehr. After 5½ years in Washington, Vaughan is returning home to her sprawling, tight-knit family in Omaha.

Vaughan started with me as an aide in my legislative office in Lincoln. It was an easy decision to ask her to come to Washington as an original member of my team. She did a good job, she worked hard, and she was a joy

to have around. She started out in the Senate, where so many do, answering phones and greeting constituents. That is hard work, but Vaughan always did it with a smile on her face.

It didn't take long for her to take on more responsibility, first as a deputy scheduler and later as a scheduler for nearly 4 years. Throughout that time, Vaughan always did her job with a special blend of diligence and humor. She has earned a reputation in the Senate as a top scheduler and the life of any party.

It is no exaggeration to say that Vaughan has been the beating heart of my office. She has made a mark here by doing her job with love and laughter every single day.

My husband, Bruce, and I are very thankful for her service, and most importantly, we are thankful for her friendship. She is one of a kind. We wish her the very best as she returns home to Nebraska.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VENEZUELA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was about 5 or 6 weeks ago that I accepted an invitation and an opportunity to visit Caracas, Venezuela. I had never been to that country before and spent 4 days. It turns out that not many Members of Congress go to this country and very few are given permission if they ask, but for some reason, I was given permission and went down there to meet with the leaders of the government and to take stock of what was happening in Venezuela.

Sadly, I have to report that Venezuela—that proud nation—is teetering on collapse. I met with President Maduro, members of his government, opposition leaders, civic and humanitarian leaders, medical experts, victims of the regime's political repression, and an American who is currently jailed on political charges in Caracas.

What I found there and recounted on the floor a few weeks ago was a heart-breaking set of overlapping crises—humanitarian, economic, and political. While these three inexcusable crises of the government's making continue, the people of this poor nation are increasingly suffering and leaving in desperation. It is one of the most desperate situations I have ever seen in a country that is not in the midst of a war. In my discussion with President Maduro, I urged him to help get his country out of the international isolation that it currently faces and put an end to the human suffering by starting with a clean election.

Last Sunday, there was an election. It was a farce. I asked him to release political opponents so they could run for office. I asked him to authorize parties to field candidates. I asked him to